



The

Union Mail

Vol. 61 No. 2 | February 2018

"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."—Martin Luther King, Jr.

WHAT:

Postal Banking

WHY:

It's Needed

WHEN:

Now

WHERE:

The Bronx

WHO:

Residents, Workers, Business Owners, and Allies



See article page 5

State of the Union Report



Jonathan Smith

NY Metro won many battles in 2017. We have converted more PSEs to full time status than any other local in the country but the USPS still wants to freeze PSE conversions. We have

successfully won new clerk duty assignments, using Article 37.3.A.1, but management continues to wage a campaign of improper reversions and job cuts.

We have increased the Postal Vehicle Service work force, but management is resisting bringing back additional work and making drivers full time. Even though we have been winning maintenance arbitrations we still have to fight for compliance. All over the country workers have been exceeded as far as 50 miles, but NY Metro has not had one person (in any craft) exceeded outside of their installation. But the USPS is still threatening to excess more jobs.

Let's take a look at where we are going into 2018.

In the Clerk Craft

In June 2017, Morgan P&DC management decided to make numerous staffing changes (reversions, abolishments, repostings, internal excessing) without meeting with the union as required by the CBA. The union grieved these unilateral changes and also filed National Labor Relations Board charges.

Then in October 2017, NY District management sent the union a proposal to do the Morgan P&DC

clerk staffing all over again. We challenged the proposal very aggressively with additional Labor Board charges. The union met with management in early November 2017 to point out the numerous contract violations. The staffing changes were supposed to be implemented around Thanksgiving. Instead, management has been issuing employee notification letters rescinding the job actions. This is directly related to the aggressive stand the union has taken to challenge management's illegal and unjust attempts to cut the clerk complement.

NY Metro is proud that we have won every reversion and 37.3.A.1 grievance we have taken to arbitration. Management has been forced to return the reverted duty assignments back to the clerk craft and post an additional clerk duty assignments in the carrier delivery stations. By year's end, the score was Union 16/USPS 0.

Although we have been winning, this does not mean the battle is over! There is a mandate from Postal HQs to cut clerk positions. At the same time, understaffing and disruption of stable jobs is taking its toll on the workers, forcing some people to quit or retire.

In the DVD facility, management also made clerk staffing changes in September 2017. Then in mid-October, DVD management informed the union that they were preparing to do the Clerk staffing all over again! The union sent an email outlining the many contract violations this action would cause and how DVD management has failed to

provide the union any supporting documentation to support this proposal. The union also made it clear that we would not meet to discuss this issue until all the requested and required information was provided to the union and we have had a reasonable chance to review and investigate DVD management's claims. This never happened, and we again filed Labor Board charges. The result? Management told the Labor Board that they were pulling that proposal off the table.

In the NDC installation there was also a reorganization of the clerk duty assignments. The union did a great job of limiting the impact by policing and enforcing the contract. We forced them to respect sec-

continued on page 11

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New Year but what has changed?

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



Tiffany Foster

2015 was a trying year with management in all installations affecting the clerk staffing by reposting, abolishing and reverting duty assignments and getting rid of a big chunk of the Tour 1 operations. Management called it the Net Rat. This was supposed to right size the operations and improve service to the American public.

It did no such thing. In fact, it worsened the morale, the work conditions and service.

The Union and employees told management that their plan was going to fail but they wouldn't listen. Who would know better how the operation should be run than the employees?

The employees got accustomed to their new schedules and here again in 2017 management is talking the same talk. We need to right size the operation. Code word: disrupt people's lives again.

Your Union fought the unjustified changes and filed grievances. Specifically, in the DVD and Morgan facilities, management wanted a re-do. Your union initiated Labor Charges regarding these unfair labor practices. As I write this article, management has not implemented the changes they were proposing. But as usual, they are like roaches, they keep coming.

In 2018, we are faced with the same attacks. Management wanting another bite at the apple. Another chance to do what won't work.

Another chance to attempt to get rid of jobs. We will fight this of course as we always have.

We are up for the fight, are you? Remember, management wants to make you mad at your union. It is management who affects the staffing not the union. Don't drink the kool-aid.

We have filed grievances in all four installations (Bronx, Manhattan which encompasses Morgan and Manhattan Customer Service Stations, DVD and NDC) for management to create newly established Clerk Craft duty assignments based on the available work hours in accordance with Article 37.3. A.1.

We have already been successful in getting this to happen. We were the first in the country to get an arbitration award instructing management to create new duty assignments with the assistance of our Clerk Craft NBA Pete Coradi. Our other Clerk Craft NBAs Bernie Timmerman and Liz Swigert have also been successful in persuading arbitrators to instruct management to create new duty assignments in our installations as well.

FYI, look out for those duty assignments in the Clerk Craft postings that say newly established based on arbitration award. It may be a duty assignment that will fit your life situation.

Management has an uphill battle in trying to reduce the career workforce. How can management justify the need to reduce the number of career duty assignments, be it occupied or vacant, when there is a large number of PSEs in the installations working full time hours in addition to the exorbitant amounts of overtime and penalty time being author-

ized for the full-time employees to work?

Makes no sense but when does it ever when it comes to Postal management.

On January 4, 2018, the USPS notified the APWU that it would be offering an Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) to the Clerk and Mailhandler crafts. There was no meeting with the APWU prior to this notification. Rightfully, the union has concerns about the VERA. Why wouldn't they want to involve the unions in this process?

We have said all along that the USPS has deliberately created an environment that will push out the older work force. The work conditions have drastically deteriorated which will likely encourage the older workforce to run. I believe that is why they didn't offer a monetary incentive to leave. In my opinion, this VERA was designed to strengthen management's bogus argument for negotiations/arbitration that the clerk craft is "over-staffed," when in fact it is being intentionally understaffed, which is why we keep winning arbitrations against wrongful reversions and abolishments.

The decision to retire is a personal one between you and your family. It is not the position of the Union to tell if you should take the VERA offer or not. What we will tell you is to be well informed about your life situation and what retirement will look like for you financially if you choose to take the offer.

Look out for NY Metro Retirement seminars which are continuously given. ☒

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

APWU calls for break with “lesser of two evils” politics

By Nora Taggart, Legislative and Political Director

In 1956, the Republican Party platform called for expansion of Social Security, broadened unemployment insurance, better health protection and expanding the minimum wage to cover more workers. It called for improved job safety for workers and equal pay for workers regardless of sex.

Yes, once upon a time, a long, long time ago, even the Republican Party feared the wrath of labor unions. Especially in the 50’s when union membership peaked at about a third of the labor force, hence their pro working-class platform in 1956. Fast forward to 2018 and what’s left of labor unions is but a small fraction of what it used to be, about 10 percent, if not less. The labor movement has been all but abandoned by both parties, even the Democrats, who have historically been the “labor friendly” party.

The reality is that the working class in this country does not have a political party that represents them. Both the Republican Party and the Democratic Party cater to the super rich, mega corporations and Wall Street.

In October 2017, at the AFL-CIO Convention, which is held every four years, the APWU drafted and/or co-introduced seven convention resolutions. Among them are Resolution 2: An Independent Political Voice and Resolution 48: Exploring New Directions for Labor in Electoral Politics.

Resolution 2 states “for decades, the political system has failed working people. Acting on behalf of corporations and the rich and powerful, the political system has been taking away, one after another, the pillars that support working people’s right to good jobs and secure benefits... the time has passed when we can passively settle for the lesser of two evils.”

Resolution 48 states that regardless whether the candidates elected are from the Republican or Democratic Party, “the interests of Wall Street have been protected and advanced, while the interests of labor and working people have generally been set back.” Because candidates and parties take labor for granted, the AFL-CIO should pursue a strategy of advancing our core issues (raising the minimum wage, creating paid sick leave, ensuring voting rights and getting corporate money out of politics) through referenda and ballot initiatives and propositions at the statewide and local level; study the viability of independent and third-party politics; and explore other reasonable means of advancing the interests of labor in electoral politics.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein addressed the delegates at the convention. “The political system is rigged, and the lesser-of-two-evils politics is not working for working people.” Dimondstein reminded them how in 2009 the Democrats had control of the White House and

both chambers of congress, including a filibuster-proof 60 vote Senate, yet they refused to pass the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). This legislation would have given workers the right to join a union simply by signing cards.

He also brought up the fact that it was Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party that shoved NAFTA down our throats and repealed the Glass Steagall Act which “helped lay the basis for the economic crisis that did so much destruction to the working class.”

“The labor movement has a long road ahead to rebuild its fighting capacity and all workers across the country need to come together and work together in order to be successful,” said President Dimondstein when the convention ended.

Bye, bye Issa

Congressman Darrell Issa, announced that he will not seek reelection to the House. The Republican lawmaker from California was chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform which oversees the US Postal Service. He had a long history of attacking the postal service by trying to end Saturday delivery, requiring millions of households to convert to cluster box delivery, trying to close thousands of post offices, cut benefits to postal workers and removed the no-layoff clause from union contracts. Good riddance!! ☹️

Postal Banking: The time for action is now



By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

In the financial crash of 2008, banks received a bailout of close to \$200 billion, while millions of working people lost their homes. Following the bailout, these banks began to close branches; 93% of those closings, were in neighborhoods with a median income below the national average.

Nationwide 7.7% of U.S. households do not have a bank account (the unbanked) and another 20%, while they have a bank account (the underbanked), are also forced to use so-called Alternative Financial Institutions, such as check cashers, pawn shops, car title loan lenders and payday lenders who charge outrageous interest rates and fees. The average family in this situation spends nearly 10% of their gross income accessing their money with these “institutions.” Collectively, the unbanked and underbanked spend \$98 billion a year at these “institutions” that are bankrolled by the very same bailed out banks that have abandoned communities to these predators.

This takes place right here at home. In the Bronx, the percentage of households with no bank account is 21.8%! In the Bronx, the percentage of underbanked is 30.5%! That’s right, more than half of the households in the Bronx (52.3%) are underserved by traditional banks. Yes, the Bronx has more Alternative Financial Service “institutions” per person than banks!

There is a solution

59% of post offices are in zip codes

with either zero banks (38%) or only one bank branch (21%). The solution is postal banking. There is precedent; the Postal Savings System operated from 1911-1967. At its peak, it held about 10% of the assets of the entire commercial banking system. Americans rank the USPS the most trusted among all federal agencies with 74% saying it does an excellent or good job. There are more than 30,000 post offices located across the nation compared with about 5,000 Walmart stores. More than 1.5 billion consumers, worldwide, use financial services at post offices. Postal banking in industrialized countries accounts for 14.5% of postal revenue on the average.

Postal banking is a win-win-win. It provides a public option for the public; it brings people to post offices; and it provides added revenue for the Postal Service. More people in post offices and more revenue means more jobs and more reasons to keep post offices open.

Delegates to the 2017 AFL-CIO Convention unanimously passed Resolution 46 to “Support Postal Financial Services and Postal Banking.” The resolution states that “the AFL-CIO endorses and supports the ‘Campaign for Postal Banking,’ including the ongoing efforts to compel the Postal Service to provide basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and electronic funds transfer, as a step toward establishing nonprofit, public postal banking.”

The American Postal Workers

Union is a founding member of the Campaign for Postal Banking. New York Metro has reached out to the Campaign to work with us in our fight for postal banking. New York Metro, the APWU and the Campaign for Postal Banking will be working with Bronx-based organizations to create a petition campaign calling for postal banking in the Bronx.

The petition to Make Postal Banking in the Bronx a Reality Now is addressed to both Bronx Postmaster Scott Farrar and U. S. Postmaster General Megan Brennan. The petition “... calls on the Postal Service to take immediate action to provide affordable financial services including ATMs, paycheck cashing, bill payment and electronic money transfers.”

You are needed to help make this petition drive a success. Please pass along petitions to your co-workers, friends, and family members who work, live, or have businesses in the Bronx. You will be able to get blank petitions from your shop stewards or at the union office. When we have a significant number of petitions, there will be a presentation event to the Bronx postmaster. Your attendance will be needed. Numbers matter!

For further information, please contact Chuck Zlatkin at chuck.zlatkin@nymetro.org or 212-563-7553, ext. 113. ☒

APWU needs YOU!

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), the Contract between the APWU and the USPS, is set to expire on September 20, 2018. Negotiations begin on June 26, 2018. Our officers have already been preparing for negotiations with a management that has been increasingly hostile over the last number of months. “The battle lines are drawn!” National President Mark Dimondstein reminds us: “Contract negotiations will be a fight.”

That fight is bigger than this contract. Our slogan, Fighting today for a better tomorrow! “underscores that negotiations are both about the immediate and important needs of ‘today,’ such as the next pay raise and ‘making it’ to retirement, while

simultaneously fighting for ‘tomorrow’ – as we stand for future generations of workers, for our families and communities, and for a vibrant public Postal Service.”

We have a strong team at the national level to represent our interests. But the union is only as strong as its members. The APWU has put out a call to all of us: “We need you to build worker power to achieve our goals for a fair contract!” There will be regular Town Hall Teleconferences where members can learn what we are up against and our goals for the negotiations. If you missed the January 24th Town Hall, go the APWU website and you can stream it by using the link.

Our Local and the National

APWU will develop Contract Action Teams and provide you with ways to get involved. You do not have to be an officer or a shop steward to play an important role. The rank and file on the shop floor in the plants and in the stations know how the Contract affects them in the day to day life of the workplace. We have to step up and stand up in response to the union’s Calls for Action to show management we are a solid and organized force fighting for a future for ourselves and the public Postal Service. ☰



APWU warning on VER

To the disappointment of many who were hoping for a cash incentive to retire now, the Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) being offered by the USPS is simply a chance for those who have not reached retirement guidelines to get out early. Unlike the VERs offered in 2009 and 2012, the Postal Service did not discuss the offer in advance with the APWU, and there are many questions and problems inherent in this latest VER.

The union has pointed out that the Postal Service is NOT over-staffed! In fact the quality of service to the public has suffered from understaffing offices around the

country. During the Christmas peak period, extra hiring improved service, but in January, job cuts, excessing, and closings are back, with a drop off in customer satisfaction. This VER should come attached to a halt to any and all cuts and excessing plans. It should be open to all crafts, not just clerks and mail handlers. And it should provide a financial incentive for those who are already of retirement age and years, as was done in 2012.

Retirement is an individual decision and there will be some workers who have reasons to go at this time. However, the APWU advises people to understand the potential

side effects and consider this option carefully. The employee’s age in relation to Social Security MRA (Minimum Retirement Age) will make a financial difference. Early retirees will not be able to continue to contribute to their TSP accounts; they will not receive COLA adjustments; and they will see a rise in cost for continuing Health Benefits and Life Insurance.

The APWU is demanding that affected employees be given time for individual retirement counseling so they can make an informed decision. The APWU Retirees Department will help answer questions. Members can call 1-877-279-8669. ☰

The battle for College Station Post Office: Lessons learned

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

Stopping the relocation of College Station was a major victory for New York Metro Area Postal Union and its community allies. We must look at this struggle for lessons to apply to future struggles. The sale and relocation of College Station was stopped as 2017 ended, but the fight to save the station began in 2009.

Lesson Number 1: In the war to Save Our Public Postal Service, we must stay vigilant

The Postal Service is relentless. Though we helped stop their moves to close the station in 2009 and 2011, the USPS came back with a vengeance in 2014. With an all-out effort we halted that action. But College Station was just another battle in the overall effort to damage the Postal Service. And while we must fight for the survival of the public Postal Service everywhere, the 2017 assault on College Station teaches us that we must stay vigilant, even when battles seem to be won.

Lesson Number 2: Each of us has a role to play

Often when the Postal Service implements an action against us, it doesn't notify the union. In the case of station sales and closings, the Postal Service does as little as possible to notify the public and elected officials. The notice to the public is often just a simple letter posted on a wall in a local post office in an obscure location. So, when you see an announcement, do not assume that the union knows! If you see something, notify your steward or

contact the union office. The earlier an attack is known, the sooner we can mount our defense and counter attack. This is war. Timing matters. Numbers matter. So, when rallies and press conferences are called, be there!

Lesson Number 3: We can't win this war alone

When the Postal Service reduces services to the public it is not just attacking our jobs, it is attacking the people it is mandated to serve. The public are our allies in this struggle. Each of us has a responsibility to carry the message and educate the people we know and the organizations that we are members of on these battles and how they are impacted by them. We should make sure we know where our elected officials stand on our issues and vote accordingly.

Lesson Number 4: The Message the Media carries is important

Most people were notified of the Postal Service's College Station relocation scheme when it was reported by DNAinfo.com, and more people learned of the struggle when it was reported on in the Amsterdam News and on radio station WBAI. While the USPS is notorious for withholding information and misdirecting the media, those on our side must make sure to give good information, report the facts and develop reputations as people who tell the truth. The corporate media may not be our friends, but the people we serve are

their audience, so we can get our message across. Also, if you see some coverage of postal issues in the media, don't assume that the union has heard, please share the information. If the coverage is good, we can spread it; if not, we'll do our best to correct it.

Lesson Number 5: We are part of labor; our fight is their fight and vice versa

In the College Station fight, we received support from postal unions, other unions, the NYC Central Labor Council and the State AFL-CIO. The move toward privatization has been happening to education, prisons, Social Security, the Veterans Administration. We had no greater allies in our fight to Stop Staples than the two national teachers' unions, the AFT and the UFT. We need to keep that in mind when we're called on to support other struggles.

We will have ample opportunities to demonstrate how well we have learned our lessons from the battle for College Station. We must stay strong, stay united and stay vigilant.



Photo National Archives, courtesy the Evan Kalish collection.

PUERTO RICO AFTER THE HURRICANES PART III

APWU is family

By Nora Taggart

Many people believe that unions are just grievance mills. However, in the aftermath of two powerful hurricanes, the American Postal Workers Union has proven that it is more than that for its members in Puerto Rico. The APWU is family. And we take care of each other.

First, the delegates to the 2017 All-Craft Conference donated \$12,500 which was matched by APWU National—resulting in \$25,000 worth of donations. Then, locals throughout the country sent articles of first necessities and money. “I cannot calculate the amount of money and items that were donated to us, but I can calculate the amount of love and solidarity that we felt; it was immense. Watching members of this Union receiving your donations was priceless. Some of these members told me that it was the first help they received from anyone,” said Juan Carlos Gonzalez, president of APWU Puerto Rico Area Local 1070.

Juan Carlos Gonzalez worked tirelessly around the clock trying to reach his members to make sure they were alright. As we mentioned previously, the island’s communication was decimated. Gonzalez and other officers in his local began checking in on their members and even family of APWU members on the mainland who had not heard from their loved ones. When rumors of postal workers stealing from care packages went viral in the media, it was



Photo courtesy of APWU-PRAL

Gonzalez, and not postal officials, who went to the news outlets to set the record straight, preserving the good image of the postal workers.

“I know first hand the concern you had for the safety and well being of your members throughout this entire difficult situation. I know what you did to help out your Sisters and Brothers going well beyond the duties of the local union president...” Northeast Regional Coordinator John Dirzius said to Juan Carlos Gonzalez. “It is often said that when times are tough, a leader’s true colors are revealed. Brother, you are a shining star and your efforts are greatly appreciated by so many.”

New York Metro echoes Brother Dirzius words. ☐

Help postal employees hurt by hurricanes



Postal Employees' Relief Fund
CFC#10268



Make an immediate donation:

Go to postalrelief.com with your credit card or send a check to:

Postal Employees' Relief Fund
P.O. Box 7630
Woodbridge, VA 22195

HELP POSTAL FAMILIES
devastated by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and by the California wildfires. The need is urgent!

Virgin Islands Area Local gets our support

By Flo Summergrad

After being slammed by Hurricane Irma, the U.S. Virgin Islands was devastated by Hurricane Maria. Power was out for months with many residents also unable to use phone service. Of course, this had a severe impact on the movement of mail. Postal workers and customers experienced shortened hours and service delays. Some mail normally shipped through Puerto Rico to the Virgin Islands was unable to move, so efforts were made to ship direct from the mainland.

In addition, the USPS reported that “extra demand for flights into the Caribbean have resulted in some disruptions to mail transportation by air. To offset this, the Postal Service is now sending additional quantities of mail by cargo ships to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and

processing it as quickly as we receive it on the islands.”

The American Postal Workers Union has helped provide a lifeline to our sisters and brothers in crisis. NYMAPU Executive Vice President Tiffany Foster brought to our Executive Board an “Adopt a Family” appeal for those who lost everything in the storm. VI Area Local President Becky Simmonds sent a list of the most requested items. A look at the needed supplies gives us some idea of the straits to which families were reduced when the simplest things that we take for granted are no longer available. Toiletries, shampoo, diapers, canned goods, batteries, first aid kits, and vitamins were needed items. In addition, the request for sunscreen, bug repellent, citronella candles, mos-



quito nets, tarps, and water purification tablets give a sense of what the people were having to cope with.

Some people sent the items themselves; our NYMAPU Local sent money which President Becky used to purchase and distribute the needed supplies. She explained that there are three islands involved—St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix—which meant mailing to members on the other islands. APWU-VI Area Local #6176 sent us words of thanks and appreciation as well as photos so we can see the money was put to good use. 📷

Photos courtesy of APWU-VIAL

State of postal politics 2017

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

2017 was a mixed bag legislatively. Considering that we went into the year with a Republican in the White House and both Houses of Congress with Republican majorities it could have been worse.

Budget Fightback

While the Fiscal Year 2018 budget was passed by both Houses of Congress, the horrendous aspects of the bill aimed at postal and federal workers were not included in the final version. The provision to move the Postal Service to “on budget” and provisions to increase employee pension contributions, ending the Social Security supplement and eliminating pensions for new hires were all eliminated.

This didn’t just happen, the work that you did calling your elected officials and letting them know that this was unacceptable had impact. Don’t ever downplay your efforts, they matter.

Postal Reform Bill Ain’t Dead Yet

A setback legislatively was the failure of House bill 756, The Postal Reform Bill of 2017, to advance. The prime sponsor of the bill, Congressman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), the chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, abruptly retired from Congress. It is a bipartisan bill with significant support from both sides of the aisle, including Congressman Mark Meadows (R-NC), chair of the subcommittee on Government Operations, and Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD) the ranking member of the House Oversight committee. This legislation is sup-

ported by the APWU and its three sister postal unions. The bill is still alive and could still be brought up for a vote. Passage of this legislation would bring much needed relief to the Postal Service and would eliminate the major excuses for cuts in services and our jobs.

Status of Postal Board of Governors

2016 ended with no appointment of the anti-union nominations for the Postal Board of Governors, thanks to Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT). There wasn’t a great deal of hope that President Trump would appoint any better nominees in 2017. He made three nominations in 2017; two were no surprise in that they were anti-union, big business advocates. The surprise was the inclusion of David C. Williams, the former Inspector General of the Postal Service, who was avidly supported for nomination to the board of governors by all four postal unions. Under Williams, the OIG, in 2014, released the White Paper, “Providing Non-Bank Financial Services for the Underserved” which was instrumental in creating much support in several sectors for a movement for Postal Banking.

Vote by Mail

Legislatively, there is hope that bills supporting Vote by Mail will be continued to be advanced in state legislatures. Twenty-seven states already allow voting by mail through no-excuse absentee voting, and they have found that voting by mail works.

Three states (Oregon, Washington and Colorado) conduct their entire elections by mail. Voting by mail

increases voter participation. It is a cost-efficient method for conducting elections. Mail balloting eliminates long lines and reduces the possibility of polling place intimidation. Voting by Mail means that ballots are handled by the most trusted federal agency—the U. S. Postal Service.

Retirees win one

There was one piece of legislation that was a long time in coming. Thirty years to be exact. The Thrift Savings Plan Modernization Act was signed into law by President Trump in 2017. The bill, which was introduced in the House by Reps. Cummings and Meadows, provides much needed flexibility to retiring postal workers.

The Act lifts the previous ill-advised restrictions. Now, retiring postal workers can make multiple, partial post-separation withdrawals from their TSP savings. The Act also allows current retirees to also make the multiple partial post-separation withdrawals.

This was the first update in the regulations since the bill was originally enacted and was sorely needed. “This is a common sense, good government bill,” Cummings said. “With greater flexibility, studies show that participants are more likely to keep their assets in their TSP accounts.”

While it is unfortunate that it took such a long time to lift these restrictions on the ability of retirees to manage their own investments in the TSP, there is a lesson to be learned with passage of this bill. No matter how inactive and/or uncooperative a Congress appears to be, you can still get important legislation passed. ☐

State of the Union Report

continued from page 2

tion and craft seniority and the requirements of the CBA and LMOUs.

The union keeps a close eye on the PSE work hours and the full-time regulars' OT hours, so we can gain new clerk duty assignments and PSE conversions. The union has initiated grievances (CBA article 37.3.A.1) in all four installations (Bronx, Manhattan, NDC and DVD). The union does not fight for overtime; we fight for jobs. We must draw a line in the sand to protect clerk work. The union won an arbitration decision preventing NY District management from placing injured and light duty Carriers and Mail Handlers into the clerk craft while cutting clerk jobs. They were ordered to stop this immediately.

In the Maintenance Craft

In March 2017, NY District Management did a complete reorganization of the Maintenance Craft by changing 95% of the custodians' Rest Days (R/Ds) and Begin Tours (BTs). The union filed a grievance and pushed it quickly to arbitration in July. We won big time! Arbitrator Thomas ordered that the custodial staffing be returned to the way it was in March 2017. Those custodians who had their R/Ds or BTs changed must be paid out-of-schedule; those who would have normally worked and were denied overtime (Sundays) had to be compensated.

Embarrassed by this big loss, postal management has challenged Arbitrator Thomas's ruling. The union pushed for a prompt remedy hearing, which should happen in February.

We will keep maintenance employees posted on this and on the results of the portion of the MS-1 staffing case for all non-custodial jobs—MM-7, MPE, BEM, ET, etc.

In the DVD facility, despite a shortage of maintenance stewards, the union has filed staffing grievances against maintenance management's attempts to improperly revert vacant custodian duty assignments. We are also awaiting the outcome of cases at Step 3 on management's failure to provide the union with requested information on the status of all maintenance duty assignments regardless of the occupational code.

In the NDC facility, the union has filed a grievance for management's failure to fill 43 vacant duty assignments, ranging from custodian to BEM and MPE. At the same time, in the NJI&NDC and the Morgan P&DC, the union is investigating and preparing to move a grievance for management's failure to follow the requirements of the TL-5 for custodial work.

We are also preparing a line H dispute in every installation. Winning money and jobs in maintenance class action cases needs research and effort. The union is ready to train and certify more maintenance stewards. We urge you to step up in 2018!

In Motor Vehicle Service

In DVD, management has stubbornly refused to convert the PTF drivers to full time regular status. DVD MVS management is trying to blame the union for their own blatant contract violations. We have been fighting for these conversions for over a year and expect to go to hearing

soon.

At the NJI&NDC, in 2012, postal management was seeking to contract out all Motor Vehicle work. We stopped them. In 2017, the APWU won a national arbitration on certain highway contracts. Arbitrator Das ordered this work to be returned to the Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) work force in certain locations. This decision increased the TTO work force at the NDC facility, but management is dragging its heels in the process of terminating contract runs. Now the union's fight is to get the entirety of the work back from the private contractor Cargo Force.

In the NY District, management is trying to add the extra responsibility of opening and closing of the carrier delivery stations on Sunday without negotiating with the union. This is clearly a violation of Article 5 of the CBA. This issue has already been grieved so the union will not let management circumvent the grievance process by agreeing to the once a year bid with this new language attached.

At both DVD and the NDC, the union is working out details for the once a year bid. At the NDC, this would be for the VOAs as well as the drivers. We also hope to have the once a year bid early in 2018 for the drivers as well as the Motor Vehicle Mechanics in the Manhattan VMF and FDR facility.

This is a Contract year

Today we woke up with a good job, benefits, a pension, a strong union, and the opportunity to fight for our future. Let's continue the progress in 2018! ☑

USPS must protect against stalking and domestic violence

By Flo Summergrad

FACT: The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that homicide is the second leading cause of death on the job for women. 21% of female workplace deaths are women murdered at work. More than a third of them are killed by boyfriends, spouses, exes, or other relatives. “When women are at work, their exes always know where to find them, don’t they?” points out Security Expert Chris F. McGoey in a report on this phenomenon.

USPS Publication 108 (Threat Assessment Team Manual) cites this in its section on “Domestic Violence and Stalking,” Section 2-6.2: “A victim of domestic violence may be particularly susceptible in the workplace because the abuser knows the victim’s work location, and it is easier for a victim to change residence or phone numbers than to change jobs. Also, a domestic violence victim may work at the same location

as the abuser or the abuser may have access to the work site from another job function.”

Pub 108 is introduced by citing the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 as mandating that the USPS has an obligation to provide employees with a safe and healthful place to work. This obligation goes beyond the dangers of industrial accidents, toxins, and ergonomic issues. It extends to the dangers of workplace violence. “Workplace violence includes domestic violence. Domestic violence awareness needs to be an integral part of any workplace prevention program.” (Pub 108 page 7)

Yet, despite this awareness on paper, managers and supervisors often fail to consider the impact that domestic violence, stalking, and other forms of intimidation can have on a worker’s attendance. A person who is being abused or terrorized

outside of work or on the job is being threatened by management with discipline for “Failure to Be Regular in Attendance.” There is currently at least one case where a woman is being fired despite clear evidence that she is at risk.

While there is no simple solution for these societal ills, it is crucial that workers and their union representatives learn and rely on the strong language of Pub 108 to force the employer to protect rather than blame the victim in these situations. Assistance from EAP and other counseling services, changes in hours or stations, and legal intervention can be explored. Post Office Women for Equal Right (POWER) has developed resources for women (and men) who are at risk. We have to encourage victims to come forward without shame or fear. This needs to be a central part of our union’s fight for a safe workplace. ☐

THERE IS HELP

Joyce B. Robinson, APWU Research & Education Department Director, is a leader in APWU Post Office Women for Equal Rights (P.O.W.E.R.) and a fighter for all our sisters. In an article called, “Break the Cycle of Violence,” she calls for victims, co-workers, and union representatives to find safe ways to deal with domestic violence.

“Many people believe that domestic violence is a private matter, but it’s not. It is a critical problem that affects us all. Domestic violence occurs in every community,

and in workplaces and schools across the country. To solve this problem, we must end the silence and change our attitudes toward this type of crime.

“In an abusive relationship, the abuser may use a number of tactics to maintain power and control over his or her partner. These include emotional and verbal abuse; isolation; threats; intimidation, and physical abuse.” ☐

National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE (7233),

or the **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP), at (800) EAP4YOU (327-4968.) Both services are strictly confidential. [Sue Carney, APWU Human Relations Director, has additional resources on the APWU website.]

Connect to P.O.W.E.R. (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) to become a stronger sister. (All APWU women are P.O.W.E.R. members.)



Fight for voting rights

By Flo Summergrad

Three years ago, North Carolina's Reverend Dr. William Barber spoke at the APWU National Convention and received a standing ovation from our delegates with the call for labor to join with the fight for civil rights—to take on the moral battle for social justice.

In January 2018, Bishop Barber tweeted: “Voter suppression & the lie of voter fraud is systemic racism. Attacking & deporting immigrants is white supremacy. Gutting the government to give a tax break to the wealthiest Americans disproportionately impacts black and brown people. That’s systemic racism.”

In order to justify disenfranchising people of color, youth, and the elderly, President Trump established a “Commission on Election Integrity,” to find proof of his absurd claim that millions of the popular votes against him were fraudulent. After 6 months of “investigation” at taxpayer expense, no evidence of voter fraud was unearthed. This January, Trump was forced to disband the discredited Commission. While this was a victory of sorts, more than half the states had already enacted voter suppression laws since the Supreme Court gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act in 2013, impacting the 2016 Presidential election. At the State of the Black World Conference, Larry Hamm, Chair of Newark’s People’s Organization for Progress, said that voter suppression strategies prevented as many as 6 million African-American voters from participating. The fight to vote has become a central civil rights issue.



In February 2009, USPS issued a Medgar Evers and Fannie Lou Hamer stamp as part of a commemorative issue honoring 12 civil rights pioneers.

Our APWU President, Mark Dimondstein, summed this up: “We are in an era of new ‘Jim Crow’ laws intended to suppress the voting rights of minorities, the poor, the disenfranchised, the working and the elderly.” Without convenient and fair access to the ballot box, the right to vote “is indeed a right diminished.”

In 1964, Malcolm X and Fannie Lou Hamer told a Harlem audience that those legislators who were elected while denying millions of their constituents the vote were in office illegally. “If we had the ballot in that area, those racists would not be in Washington, D. C. There’d be some black faces there, there’d be some brown and some yellow and some red faces there.” This was such a threat to white supremacist rule in the south that a campaign of terror was unleashed against black voters. In Mississippi, Fannie Lou Hamer and other organizers were jailed, beaten, and murdered for the “crime” of registering black citizens to vote.

In a July 2017 filing to the UN,

Reverend Barber evoked this historic movement for voting rights: “Enfranchisement is essential to human freedom and dignity. . . . To deny citizens’ right to vote is to deny their full humanity. Too many people have bled and died in America’s long fight for voting rights. Their blood cries out against this evil. Racist voter suppression and district gerrymandering undermine the influence of the poor in the political process and allow extremists to get elected and promote policies that exacerbate injustice and inequality.”

Reverend Barber points out that Jones defeated Moore in Alabama last month despite the voter suppression laws. This was due in part to a huge turnout of black voters. Just think what power we can have: “Jones won Alabama with James Crow, Esquire, in control of the election boards. If a Senate seat can flip under those conditions, then what might be possible of the Voting Rights Act were restored by Congress, if automatic voter registration were instituted at the state level, and if we were able to mount a mass voter education/mobilization campaign, resulting in record voter participation across the South? What felt like an exception to the political rule in 2017 could be the new reality in 2018: progressive candidates could run and win across the South.”

Today, the fight to vote is a critical civil rights issue. 53 years after the Voting Rights Act, the struggle continues. ☐

POSTAL PRIDE

APWU named Most Valuable Union

In *The Nation's* Progressive Honor Roll for the year 2017, our own APWU was named the Most Valuable Union for its role in resisting the backward forces that have been turning back the clock on the gains of years of struggle. "Resistance was the watchword this year" among the honorees who refused to go backwards, In presenting the awards, John Nichols quoted Dr. Martin Luther King: "The moral arc of the universe is long but it is bending toward justice" APWU is an organized force bending that arc.

While the APWU has been doing its part in fighting to advance the struggle of postal workers for improving wages, hours, and working conditions, it has also played an important role as an organized force in bending the arc toward social justice. Nichols writes, "If you want solidarity in action, consider the response of the union that represents more than 200,000 US Postal Service employees and retirees in response to last summer's Nazi violence in Charlottesville, VA." Not only did the APWU join in the outrage and condemnation of the attacks but President Mark Dmondstein explained to the members why "rallying for equality and against the hate-mongers is essential union work," not just a sidebar.

"What does this have to do with the APWU?" asked the President. "Everything!" Why? "Fascists are bitter enemies of workers and our unions. Their race and religious bigotry, intimidation, and violence are a direct threat to our unity and ability to stand up and fight back to save the public Postal Service, win good contracts, gain better working conditions, enjoy a better life and live in a more just society."

We can be proud that being a member of this great union means being an integral part of the struggle for justice. ☐



Postal News Briefs

WE DELIVER!

During Christmas, the USPS supported the delivery of over 3 billion pieces of First Class mail and nearly 200 million packages. This was 10% more than last year, with customers grateful to see deliveries over Sundays and even on Christmas Day itself.



PUBLIC APPROVAL FOR POSTAL SERVICE

For many years, the Postal Service has been rated the most trusted government agency by the American people. This year's Gallup poll figures show that the positive image of the USPS has risen even further—to 74%. Far from being a tribute to nostalgia for an irrelevant agency, this figure is even higher when broken down by age—with those under 50 giving an approval rating of 81%!

Considering the disgruntlement with government agencies and representatives in this last year, the image of the Postal Service is "remarkably positive," trusted by all age groups and by both men and women. The USPS is the nation's second largest employer and is valued for its daily interactions with people's lives. Postal workers are seen as providing professional service while being an integral part of the community.

APPROVED



NALC REBUTS TRUMP'S TWEET THAT THE PO IS GETTING 'DUMBER AND POORER'

At the end of 2017, Trump tweeted that Amazon is getting "richer" and the USPS "dumber and poorer." A "smarter" Postal Service would charge higher parcel rates to get out of the red. On January 9, 2018, his insulting tweet was answered by the National



Association of Letter Carriers. The NALC pointed out the President's ignorance of laws that govern postal pricing, and cited the legal requirements of providing universal service. The Postal Service is hamstrung by the Presidential failure to appoint a full Board of Governors; moreover, if Trump worked to repeal the PAEA, with its onerous pre-funding mandate, the USPS would already be profitable. In addition, the NALC links Trump's comments to a 40-year effort by the United Parcel Service (UPS) to get the Postal Service to raise package shipping cost, thus giving more parcel business to overpriced UPS. ☐

CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 21

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Nominations for Local election

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Skytop Room, 18th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

Wednesday, March 21

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Skytop Room, 18th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

Wednesday, April 18

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Skytop Room, 18th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of 11/01/2017	\$ 733,758.87
Total Revenue November 2017	\$ 166,157.52
Total Operating Expenses November 2017	\$ 148,860.11
TOTAL NET INCOME	\$ 17,297.41
Closing Balance as of 11/30/2017	\$ 751,056.28

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of 12/01/2017	\$ 751,056.28
Total Revenue December 2017	\$ 180,995.52
Total Operating Expenses December 2017	\$ 127,983.77
TOTAL NET INCOME	\$ 53,011.75
Closing Balance as of 12/31/2017	\$ 804,068.03

Thank you, Dan Zachman



As 2017 came to an end, our long-time officer, friend, and leader, Danny Zachman, retired from his jobs with the USPS and the union. After four years in the Air Force, Dan entered the Maintenance craft as a Labor Custodian 35 years ago. He worked his way up to become a Maintenance Electrician at the NJI&NDC. At the same time, he took on a more active role to improve our union, becoming NY Metro Area Postal Union's Director of Industrial Relations (D.I.R.) from 1999-2003, and again elected and serving as D.I.R. from 2012 - 2015 and from 2015 to the present. In addition to his work as grievance officer, Danny kept informed about the enemies of working people so he could inform others. He understood the fight to defend America's Postal Service for the public and the workers.

Most important, members appreciated his fierce desire to see justice done. His heart had room for everyone who needed him. No problem was too small for him to find a solution. If he didn't know the answer, he kept trying until he found someone who could help.

Dan's sense of humor kept us laughing through the bleakest times and no one could ever question his depth of love for our union and its goals. He has carried the banner of the NY Metro Area Postal Union into battle literally and figuratively for many years.

We wish Danny the best as he moves on, but we know that he will always be there for NY Metro and its members! ☹️



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COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS: _____

www.nymetro.org